

II. TIMOTHY 2:15

by

HOWARD W. POPE



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II. Timothy 2:15

A Course of Study
In Personal Work

By *alter*
HOWARD W. POPE
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United Society of Christian Endeavor
Boston and Chicago

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This book is dedicated to my dear wife, who has encouraged and helped me in all the Christian work I have ever done.

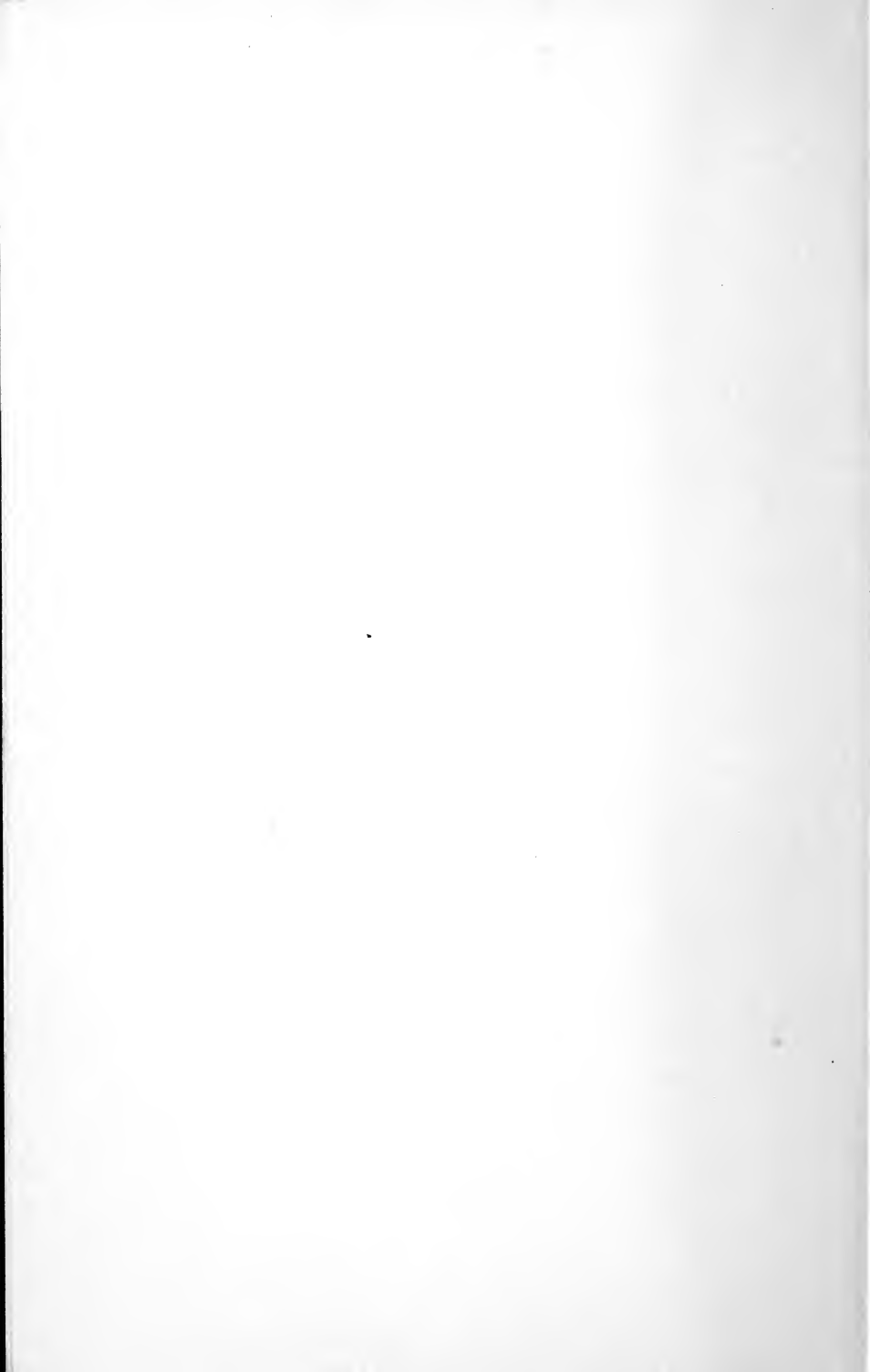
While I have travelled up and down the land, seeking to save the lost, she has patiently "stayed by the stuff," and kept the hearthstone warm for my coming.

When we reach heaven, if it be found that there are two stars in my crown, she shall have one of them.



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Introduction

THE Christian Endeavor movement began in a revival, and it has always flourished in the evangelistic atmosphere.

It has appropriated to itself the words of the Master to the early church as recorded in Acts 1: 8, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

While training and developing along every line of service, its pledge and prayer-meeting have steadily held before the young people the idea that they were called to be outspoken witnesses for Christ.

Several years ago I addressed a letter to seven of the leading evangelists asking whether in their judgment, as a result of their long personal experience in evangelistic work, they considered

the Christian Endeavor methods successful in training evangelistic workers.

Without an exception they replied, and all of them bore enthusiastic testimony to the helpfulness of the Christian Endeavorers in their evangelistic meetings, laying particular stress upon the Endeavorers' success in personally dealing with individuals and leading them to a decision for Christ.

To train a still larger number of disciples to do this kind of quiet, personal evangelistic work in their churches is the object of the publication of this little book.

The author is a long-time friend of Christian Endeavor, and was the originator of the uniform prayer-meeting topics now used by millions of young people in scores of thousands of societies in all parts of the world.

He has had many years of experience as a pastor, as an evangelist, and in training evangelists in the Moody Institute, Chicago.

He writes out of a full knowledge of all the conditions, and a personal experience in meeting all the problems.

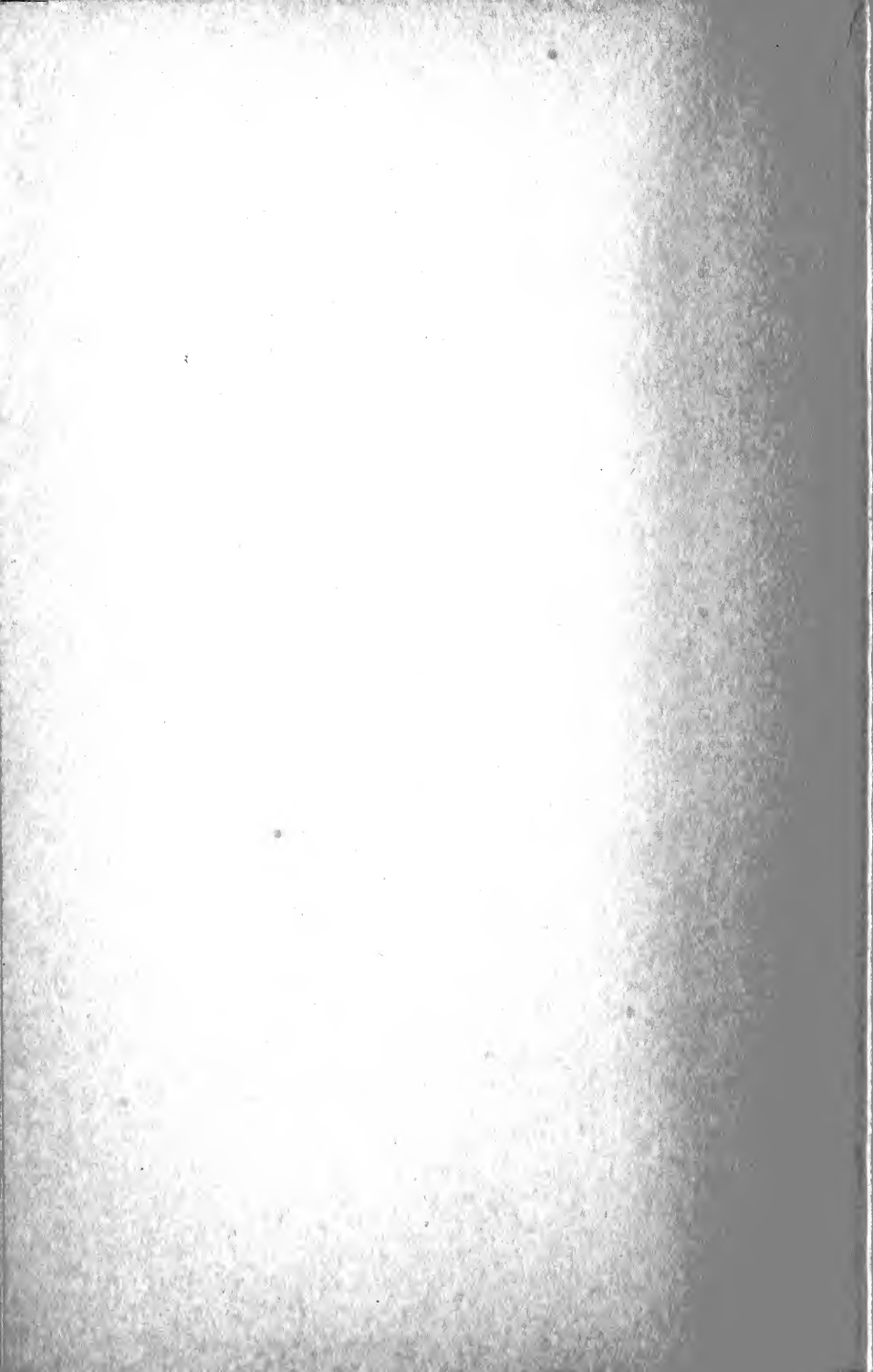
I feel sure that the book will be heartily welcomed by a great host of earnest pastors who want their young people to become efficient soul-winners, and by a still larger host of enthusiastic young people who are eager for the practical training this book will give them.

Every Christian Endeavor union should organize a normal class to train leaders, and every Christian Endeavor society should have during the winter season a class for personal workers who, with this book as their text-book, will learn how to become efficient witnesses for Christ.

With a personal workers' class to train the young people to do the work in "Jerusalem and Judea" and a mission-study class to fit them for service "unto the uttermost parts of the earth," Christian Endeavor will be contributing its part to the training of a church that will both hear and obey the great commission which was given to the whole church, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

WILLIAM SHAW.

*Tremont Temple,
Boston, Mass., Sept. 1, 1910.*



II. Timothy 2 : 15

CHAPTER I

PERSONAL EVANGELISM: WHO SHOULD DO IT, AND WHY

WHAT IS MEANT BY PERSONAL WORK?

By personal work is meant individual effort to lead another person to Christ. It is individual effort as distinguished from united effort. Its aim is to reach one person, and not a number; and its object is to persuade that person, not to abandon certain habits, or to believe a certain creed, or to unite with some church, but to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour.

WHY DO IT?

1. *Our Lord commands it.* No one can read the New Testament without discovering that He expects every one of His followers to become a soul-winner. He taught the world thirty years by example and three years by precept. Then

at the close of His earthly career He uttered one command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." That command remains in force to this day. "Ye have not chosen me," He says, "but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

Here, then, is the Christian's call and commission to be a personal worker. Couple with these commands such ringing utterances as, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you," and "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" It is evident that we must either quit calling Jesus "Lord," or we must go about the Master's business.

2. *The nature of the gospel requires it.* It is "good news," and hence it must be carried to the individual by an individual. We hear much about reaching the masses and regenerating society, but we must not forget that society is composed of units. Sin is an individual matter, and so is salvation. The world will not be judged by nations or by townships, but "every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

Jesus taught the crowds ; but, when He forgave men's sins, He did it one by one. " Ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel." The gospel is so simple that even a child can understand it ; but sin is so subtle, and the needs of men so varied, that often it requires an experienced worker to apply the gospel to the individual successfully.

One sinner thinks that he is not very bad ; another is afraid that he cannot hold out, while others have doctrinal difficulties of various kinds. And, what is worse still, most of them are not quite ready to do their duty when they see it, without more or less persuasion. Hence no amount of preaching can ever take the place of the personal worker.

3. *The changed conditions of society demand it.* Formerly it was customary for people to attend church. Indeed, one was hardly counted respectable unless one did. That day has gone by. The world no longer comes to the church for the gospel. The majority of the people to-day do not attend church. One reason for this is the strenuous life that many lead. They

work so hard through the week that they consume seven days' strength in six days' time. When Sunday comes, they are so exhausted that they think they cannot attend church. Many working men receive so small wages that they cannot provide suitable clothing ; and, even if they do go, the contrast between their humble home and the elegant church is often so striking as to be painful. In many churches also the gospel is no longer preached, but only a cheap substitute for it.

For these and other reasons a large part of every community practically ignores the church. This being the case, there is only one alternative ; the church must carry the gospel to the world, for the gospel they must have.

4. *Christians need it for their own growth.* There is nothing that gives one such a relish for the gospel as the habit of personal work. The soul-winner is usually a diligent student of the Bible and an eager listener to the truth, in order that he may learn new or better ways of leading men to Christ. Furthermore, the personal worker must necessarily be a good man. His

calling compels him to be godly. Others may hold convictions that they are not putting into practice, but he cannot. He knows by experience that, if he is not living in absolute obedience to God, he will have no confidence in prayer, and no power in personal appeal.

It is doubtful, too, whether one can realize the depravity of human nature until he has dealt with one that is utterly indifferent to the gospel. Here, for instance, is a man that seems to have no consciousness of sin, no sense of spiritual need. He sees no beauty in Jesus Christ. Love does not appeal to him; law does not terrify him. He is as dead to God and heaven and the life eternal as a corpse in a coffin is dead to any human appeal. Such an experience shows the worker the utter folly of presenting any remedy for sin save the gospel offer of a new, divine nature to all who accept Jesus Christ.

WHO SHOULD DO PERSONAL WORK?

All Christians should do personal work. Every one has some influence; and he can, if he will, use it to win others to Christ.

1. *If you say, "I do not know how," the answer is, "Learn how."* There was a time when you did not know how to read, or write, or make shoes, or sell merchandise; but you learned how, as others have done before. Even so if you will apply your minds to the task of learning how to win men to Christ as earnestly and persistently as you did to learning your business, you will doubtless be as successful in the one as in the other. All your inexperience and fancied inability amount to nothing in the face of the Master's express command, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

It is said that, when Mr. Edison was trying to perfect the phonograph, he had great difficulty in making it sound the sibilant. He describes his experience as follows: "I would speak into the machine the word 'specia,' and the hateful thing would answer back, 'pecia, pecia, pecia.' I worked on that one difficulty eighteen hours a day for seven months, until finally I conquered it."

If an inventor will labor like that to overcome a mechanical difficulty, surely a Christian can af-

ford to devote his spare hours, and even sit up nights if necessary, in order to learn how to make souls that are spiritually dumb sound forth the praises of our glorious God.

2. *Every Christian has opportunities to do personal work.* A friend of mine was giving a Bible-reading in an Eastern city. At the close a lady came to her and said: "Mrs. Walker, I do not agree with all you said to-day. You said that all Christians can lead souls to Christ if they will. But that is not true. Look at me, for instance. I am a mother with several small children. I could not have attended this meeting to-day only that my mother came to take care of the children. So you see that there are some people who cannot lead others to Christ."

Mrs. Walker replied: "Perhaps so, but I do not quite see it yet. Would you mind if I asked you a few questions?"

"Certainly not."

"Very well. Do you employ a milkman?"

"Yes."

"How often does he call at your house?"

"Every morning."

"Is he a Christian?"

"I don't know."

"Does the grocer call at your house very often?"

"Yes, once a day at least, and sometimes twice."

"Is he a saved man?"

"Well, really, I cannot say. I have never asked him."

"Does the meatman come every day?"

"Yes."

"Has he been converted?"

"Mrs. Walker, I don't know anything about it." And with that she turned and went out of the room.

Two years afterward Mrs. Walker was in the same city, giving a Bible-reading in another church. At the close a lady came up to her and said, "Mrs. Walker, do you remember me?"

"No, I don't think I have ever seen you before."

"Well, I remember you very distinctly." Then she recalled their former interview, and said: "I went out of that room, Mrs. Walker,

vexed with you and myself and everybody else. I couldn't sleep very much that night. I pondered the matter long and carefully, and finally came to the conclusion that it was just as much my business as any one's to know about the spiritual condition of those who were daily coming to my door.

"I made up my mind that I would begin with the milkman, and I thought out a nice little speech to fit his case. I arose early, built my fire, and waited for my man. Pretty soon he came hurrying in as milkmen do, poured out his milk, and was about to leave. Meanwhile I had been fumbling about, trying to find my speech; but somehow I could not get hold of either end of it. Finally, in despair, I shouted out his name just as he went out of the door. He hurried back, and began to tip up his milk-can, saying as he did so, 'Do you want another quart?'

"'No, I don't want another quart,' I replied; 'I want to ask you if you are a Christian.'

"He sat down in a chair; and, looking me straight in the face, he said: 'Mrs. ———, why didn't you ask me that question last year? You

remember we were holding special meetings in our church ; and I was interested, but I felt ashamed to let it be known. However, I knew that you were a Christian ; and so I kept telling you about the meetings, and talking to you every morning about one and another who had come out for Christ, hoping that you would say something to me about my soul. You never said one word, Mrs. ——— ; and now I don't care one cent about the whole business' ; and with that he picked up his milk-can and left the house.

“ Mrs. Walker, perhaps you can imagine how I felt. I lay down on my kitchen floor flat on my face ; and there I lay, and sobbed out my shame and grief before God until I was assured of His forgiveness. I promised Him that, if He would forgive me this time, I would try to live so that none who came to my door should ever have just cause to say that I did not care for his soul. Then I arose and prepared for business. And, Mrs. Walker, there were nine people who came to my house that day to whom I was able to give a gospel message, and to-day seven out

of the nine are professing Christians. Mrs. Walker, I believe that you are right when you say that every Christian can, if he will, lead souls to Christ."

WHERE SHOULD PERSONAL WORK BE DONE?

Personal work can be done anywhere. Jesus said to the Gadarene demoniac, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee." That is the place for every worker to begin, in his own home. It is often the hardest place of all in which to work, but unless we are faithful here we cannot expect the Lord to bless us elsewhere.

Our Saviour found lost souls wherever He went—by the wayside well, on the seashore, among the tombs, up a tree, and even on the cross. Nineteen times it is recorded that He stopped to talk with a single person, and if we will adopt the habit of watching for opportunities we shall be surprised to see how often they come. Matthew was converted in a custom-house, Moody in a shoe-shop, and Peter and John while mending their nets.

Church socials afford a good opportunity to do religious work. Some churches plan entertainments especially for evangelistic work. In fact, there is no occasion where the gospel is out of place. At a ball-game or a boat-race is just as good a place to talk about Jesus as in a pulpit or a prayer-meeting. The gospel has been too much confined to damp vestries and dreary prayer-rooms. It is high time to get it out-of-doors into the sunlight, and to divest it of the musty smell and solemn tone that have prejudiced so many people against it. Yes, personal work can be done anywhere, at any time, and by anybody who knows how.

IN WHAT SPIRIT SHOULD PERSONAL WORK BE DONE?

1. *Profound humility.* Do not give the impression that you consider yourself a better man than the one you are dealing with, or that you regard yourself as an expert in the art of soul-winning. Such an impression will surely defeat your purpose.

The only basis on which one can safely

approach another is that of a sinner saved by grace, who, having been saved himself, desires to help his fellow men. Paul was the greatest soul-winner of his day; but his humility kept pace with his success, as is shown by the following expressions taken from his letters as he advanced in years, "not meet to be called an apostle," "less than the least of all saints," "the chief of sinners."

2. *Positive assurance.* While the personal worker should be humble, yet he must not be lacking in certainty as to his own salvation. It is not necessary that he should know *when* he became a Christian, but it is very important that he should know that he *is* a Christian. So long as one is in doubt as to his own standing in Christ, it is utterly useless for him to try to lead others to Christ.

If it be asked, "Can one know surely that he is a Christian?" the answer is, Paul knew that he was saved (2 Tim. 1:12), and 1 John 5:13 shows that God intends that all His children shall know whose children they are. "These things have I written unto you, that ye may

know that ye have eternal life." There are three sure proofs of the believer's sonship.

(a) The witness of God's word. Remember that forgiveness of sin is something that takes place in the mind of God, and not in the emotional nature of the believer. Our first and best evidence of any such transaction, then, must be the testimony of God Himself. If He names certain conditions upon which He will forgive sin, and I comply with those conditions, I know that my sins are forgiven, because I have God's word for it. If I accept Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour, I know that I have become a child of God, because God's word affirms it. It is not a question of how I feel, but of what God says. The feeling may be wholly lacking, and yet the transaction may be none the less real.

(b) The witness of the Spirit. "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:16). Let it be clearly understood that the witness of God's word is sufficient to prove that one is a child of God, and that, if one does not believe this

witness, he makes God a liar (1 John 5:10). However, the believer is entitled also to the witness of the Spirit, and he should not rest satisfied until he has it. It is a part of his inheritance in Christ Jesus; and, if he has not received it, he should reverently but persistently inquire the reason why.

In some cases where the witness of the Spirit is lacking it will be found that the person has made no confession of Christ. Matt. 10:32 shows that, when we confess Christ before men, He confesses us before the Father. Rom. 10:9 and 1 John 5:10 would seem to indicate that, when we confess to the world that we have taken Jesus as our Saviour, the Spirit witnesses in our hearts that we are saved.

A friend of mine was accosted by a lady at the close of a service, who told him that she had been trying to lead a Christian life for years, but that she had never enjoyed any assurance. She was a woman of intelligence and refinement. He questioned her carefully, but to all his questions she answered with the utmost frankness and candor that she knew of nothing in her life

that was displeasing to God. Finally he asked whether she had ever confessed Christ. To his surprise she answered in the negative. She was waiting until she had the inward assurance that she was saved before she made an outward confession of her faith. He showed her from the Bible that she was reversing God's order, which is first confession, and then the witness of the Spirit. The next night she was in the meeting; and, when an opportunity occurred, she arose and quietly said, "Friends, I wish to make a public confession of my faith in Jesus Christ."

The next day my friend met some one on the street who inquired whether he had heard about Mrs. ———.

"No, what about her?"

"Why, last night she went to her neighbor's house after they had retired, and rang the bell. They opened the window, and inquired who was there. She answered, 'It is Mrs. ———. I have confessed Christ as my Saviour to-night, and I am so happy that I cannot contain myself. All my life I have been robbing Him of my influence and robbing myself of His joy. O

friends, do confess Christ as your Saviour.' From house to house she went for half the night ringing door-bells, and telling of her joy, and urging people to confess Christ."

(c) The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5 : 22). "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." This is the evidence that our neighbors will appreciate most, and which ought to be apparent to all. It does not appear all at once, however, for fruit grows, and growth requires time, while a gift is bestowed instantly.

3. *Genuine sincerity.* The world has an idea that Christians frequently do not mean what they say, either in their personal testimony, or in their exhortations to others. For this reason their words often have but little weight. Occasionally our eyes are opened to this fact in a painful way, as in the following instance.

In a series of meetings at Lafayette, Ind., a certain judge had been present at all the services. He was a church-member, but rather cold and undemonstrative. During the meetings he had made no response to any of the appeals

made to Christians for support. Just before the services closed he arose one day, and said : " Mr. ———, one of our business men, has died within the last hour ; I was with him ; and, when I saw that he could not live, I asked him if he was prepared to die. ' No,' he replied. ' Haven't you ever been warned ? ' ' Yes, my friends have often spoken to me about it, but somehow I never thought they half meant what they said.' Brethren," said the judge, " from this time forth I want the world to know that I mean what I say, that I mean business."

The only way to avoid giving a false impression is to be genuinely sincere. Say what you mean, and mean what you say. Don't preach purity unless you are pure yourself. Do not urge others to do what you are not willing to do. In other words, do not preach beyond your own experience. If you haven't an experience, get one. Wait until you have some convictions before you begin to talk to others about their duty. But, if you will be honest with God in prayer, and with your fellow men in speech, you will have no trouble in convincing them of your sincerity.

Questions

What is meant by personal work ?

Why should it be done ?

What is the highest motive for doing it ?

Why do so few Christians engage in it ?

Who should do it ?

Is any Christian excused from it ?

Where is personal work most needed ?

Where is it not needed ?

Name good fields for personal work not now occupied.

In what spirit should it be done ?

How may a worker hinder his own work ?

How can one be sure that he is a Christian ?

Which is the most satisfying reason to you ?

What is the best proof to your neighbor that you are a Christian ?

Why does the world question the sincerity of Christians ?

Do you mean all you say in testimony and exhortation ?

If not, why not ?

CHAPTER II

HOW SHOULD WE PREPARE ?

I. *By right living.* The strongest argument for Christianity is a godly life. There is about it something that is well-nigh irresistible. Daniel says, "The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits," but it is only the pure in heart who can know God.

A few years ago a young Japanese came to the study of Dr. Leighton Parks of Boston, and desired an interview. The conversation that followed was something like this :

"Sir, can you tell me about the beautiful life ?"

Dr. Parks answered, "Do you wish to talk with me about religion ?"

"No, sir ; I merely wish to inquire about the beautiful life."

"Have you ever read the Bible ?"

"Yes, I have read it some, but I do not like your Bible."

"Have you ever attended church services?"

"Yes, I have been to church two or three times, but I do not like the church. I am trying to find the beautiful life. I notice that many of your American people lie and cheat and do mean things like the Japanese, and yet you are all Christians. No, I do not think it is your religion; but there is something that I want. I do not know what it is, but I call it the beautiful life."

"Where did you hear about it?" asked Dr. Parks.

"I never heard about it at all, but I saw it first in San Francisco. I spent three weeks in a boarding-house with an old man who had it. He was not an educated man like myself. I have studied at our Japanese universities, and I am now studying at one of your greatest American universities. But this man I speak of was uneducated and very humble. He was a poor man, but there was something inexpressibly beautiful about his life. He was always helping

others ; he never seemed to think of himself at all ; but he was always going about doing good to others. I had always thought that there might be something of the kind in the world, but I had never seen it. Since then I have seen a few others who had it in some of your American homes. I do not think it is your religion, for all do not seem to have it."

Dr. Parks opened his Bible to 1 Cor. 13, and read to him Paul's wonderful description of the love that faileth not.

"Is that what you are looking for?" he inquired.

"Yes, I think perhaps it is. At all events, it sounds like it. But, sir, can you tell me how to get it? I must have it at any cost."

Then Dr. Parks told him the story of Jesus, and gave him a New Testament, and sent him away, telling him that he must study it and pray that light might be given him to live this beautiful life.

Dr. Parks heard nothing from the Japanese for a year or two, but finally received a letter from him, saying that he had been called back

to his country to fill an important position ; but he had something to tell him, and wished to see him.

When the Japanese arrived, he was in a great hurry ; and, drawing out his watch, he said, "My train starts for San Francisco at two o'clock, where I take the steamer for Japan ; but I want to tell you that I have found the beautiful life, I have found Jesus Christ."

The Japanese thought it was not the Christian religion that he was seeking, because most of the Christians he saw did not seem to possess the beautiful life ; and yet every life that is hid with Christ in God ought to be winsome and beautiful.

A few years ago a student at the Moody Bible Institute worked his passage to England on a cattle-steamer for the express purpose of leading his brother to Christ. He resolved that he would not introduce the subject of religion at first, but would see what could be accomplished by a Christlike life. He had not been there long before his brother said to him : " Frank, what has come over you since you left home ? You

are so different from what you used to be! Whatever it is, I want it. Now tell me how to get it." With this introduction it was an easy task, of course, to lead his brother to Christ.

On the other hand, if there is any conscious sin in a person's life, it is impossible for him to do effective personal work. David says in Psalm 51 : 12, 13, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation. . . . *Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways ; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

It was not strange that David had lost his power, or that sinners were no longer being converted under his ministry. There was sin in his life, and he knew it, and hence his hearty confession and plea for mercy. Persuading people to repent is a work so delicate and difficult that it is useless to attempt it unless we are right with God ourselves.

At a time when there was some religious interest at Princeton College one of the students offered himself as a worker. He was assigned to see a certain man. When asked about the result of his visit, he replied : " O, I made no

headway. It was a great mistake to send me there. When I asked him why he was not a Christian, he looked at me and said, 'Are you a Christian?' 'Yes.' 'Are you a fair sample of Christianity?' 'Yes, I think I am about the average.' 'You are?' 'Yes.' 'Then I do not want to be a Christian.'" That answer went straight to the man's heart. He knew what it meant. The unbeliever had seen him cheat in examinations; he had heard him say things that were not true; and he had lost all respect for him. It is not enough to be sound in doctrine; one must also be consistent in life. And, even when the outward life is exemplary, there may be a secret, unforgiving spirit, or unwillingness to do God's will, which hinders our usefulness.

A lady once said to me, "I am the daughter of a minister; I am a graduate of Wellesley College; I have taught in Sunday-school ever since I was fifteen years old; and yet to the best of my knowledge I have never led a single soul to Christ."

"I thought that all your boys became Christians last Sunday."

"That is true; but I had nothing to do with it, and that is what is breaking my heart."

"Do not be too sure of that," I replied; and then I used an illustration something like this: "Suppose that chandelier was suspended by a chain instead of a rod. What link in the chain do you think would be the most important, the first, or the second, or the last one?"

"I do not see as there would be any difference. If you take out any of them, the whole thing would come down."

"Very true," I replied. "Now, in the long chain of events by which God brings any wandering soul back to Himself, which is the most important link, the first, or the fiftieth, or the last?"

"There is no difference. If any one of the links is gone, you cannot secure the final result."

"Perhaps you did not speak the final words that led your boys to decision, but you have certainly spoken many earnest words that prepared the way for some one else to lead them to decision. Who shall say that your words were not just as important as his?"

"There is some comfort in that, I must admit."

"Certainly, that is why I said it."

"But do you not think that every Christian ought to be able to speak the last words which lead a soul to decision occasionally?"

"I do. I believe that God wishes all His children to be soul-winners, and that He has made abundant provision for that end."

"I think there is something wrong in my life," she replied.

I thought so too, and so I waited for the Lord to show her what was needed. In a few weeks she sent word that she was now ready to devote her life to winning souls to Christ, and that she was willing to live in the slums, or wherever God chose to use her.

In this instance there was some conscious disobedience that had evidently stood in her way for years. So long as there is any such obstacle one cannot pray with confidence, or speak with power. We must be able to look God in the face and say, "Thou knowest that I love Thee," and also look our neighbor in the face and say,

" You know that I am anxious for your conversion."

But some one may ask, " Can we ever be sufficiently free from sin to feel warranted in talking to others about their sins? " Yes, indeed. Every personal worker must and can be free from guilt of conscious sin. If there is anything wrong in your life, confess and forsake it, and God will forgive you instantly. If you have lost the respect of any one, you doubtless know the reason why. Go to him, and frankly acknowledge your fault, and ask his forgiveness. Then you are in a position to talk to him about his sins, but not before. How fully God forgave David and restored to him his old-time power is shown by the fact that the Christian church has been feeding her soul on his psalms for centuries, and will for all time to come.

2. *By prayer.* The importance of prayer as a preparation is seen when we consider the nature of the work. The task before us is to convince men that they are lost, and to persuade them to confess their sin and surrender their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is easy to show a

thief or a drunkard that he is a sinner, and needs salvation; but it is not easy to persuade a respectable moral man that he is a sinner simply because he has not accepted Christ as his Saviour. Sin is so subtle, and the human heart so stubborn, that only the Holy Spirit can make one see that unbelief is the crowning sin of all.

The common idea is that work is the main business of the Christian, and a little prayer is necessary to help the work along. Christ's idea is entirely different. In His thought prayer is our chief business, with just enough work to make a channel through which the spiritual forces generated by prayer may find an outlet. Prayer is the bow that supplies the force, and work is the feather that guides the arrow to its destination. "If ye shall ask—I will do," He says. In other words, Christ is still doing the work that He "began to do" (Acts 1:1), and He invites us to help Him by prayer, whereas too many Christians think that they are carrying on the work, but need a little help from Him. What your idea is may best be determined by estimating the amount of time that you spend in

working for the Lord and the amount of time spent in prayer.

Yes, we are ignorant, but thank God we can all learn. Jesus has opened a school of prayer in which, if we will, we may learn the divine art. And what a teacher ! How patient, how long-suffering with dull scholars ! And how much He knows about the subject ! For eighteen hundred years this has been His constant occupation, and now He invites us to become His pupils, and offers to teach us all He knows. " All things that I have heard from my Father I have made known unto you " (John 15 : 15).

The personal worker should cultivate the habit of praying daily for all men. This is not only a positive command (1 Tim. 2 : 1), but the habit has many obvious advantages. For instance, you never meet a person for whom you have not prayed, and this fact gives you a deeper interest and a stronger faith than would otherwise be possible. Sometimes it is well to tell the person you are dealing with that you have prayed for him scores of times. Possibly he may ask, " Have you ever seen me before ? "

"Not to my knowledge."

"And yet you say that you have prayed for me many times?"

"Yes, sir."

"I cannot understand that."

"Very likely. That is one of the mysteries of the Kingdom, and there are many other strange things that you cannot understand until you are a Christian yourself."

Think what it will mean when you reach heaven, and people come to you with some such introduction as this: "I am glad to meet you, my friend. You may not recognize me, for I spent my life in China and you in America, but since I reached heaven I have been looking up the links in the chain of influences that brought me here, and I find that the fact that you were praying daily for me for some ten or fifteen years was a strong factor leading to my conversion. When I discovered this, I resolved to look you up and thank you for what you have done for me." Why should not such experiences be a matter of daily occurrence to us in heaven if we practise the habit of daily prayer for all men?

It is well also to have a prayer list, and daily remember by name those whom God has especially laid on our hearts. As a rule it is easy to speak to those for whom we have often prayed. Gypsy Smith tells us that when he was converted he immediately became anxious for the conversion of his uncle. Among gypsies it was not considered proper for children to address their elders on the subject of duty ; and so the boy just prayed, and waited for God to open the way. One day his uncle noticed a hole in his trousers, and said, " Rodney, how is it that you have worn the knees of your pants so much faster than the rest of them ? "

" Uncle, I have worn them out praying for you, that God would make you a Christian " ; and then the tears came of course.

Nothing more was said, but the uncle put his arm around the boy, and drew him close to his breast, and in a little while was bending his knees to the same Saviour. When we wear our clothes thin in praying for others, we shall not find it hard to speak to them if the opportunity occurs.

Not only does prayer bring conviction of sin, remove difficulties, and soften prejudices; but often it opens the way for us to meet the very person whom we desire to help. I heard a minister say recently that he was urgently requested to interview and lead to Christ a lady who was entirely unknown to him. She did not attend his church, and he had no reasonable excuse for calling upon her. He began to pray that God would open the way for a meeting, and the very next Sunday at the close of service a lady came up and introduced herself to him; and it proved to be the very one whom he was anxious to meet. She had come to his church for the first time, and entirely without the solicitation of any one, and even made herself known to him.

When Mr. George Müller was in this country, a friend of mine asked him how long he had ever prayed continuously for any object. Taking a little book from his pocket, he said: "When I was converted, I was a wild boy in college. My conversion broke friendship between my roommate and myself, for he would 'have noth-

ing to do with such a fanatic,' he said. I wrote his name in this book, and promised God that I would pray for him each day until he was converted, or until I died. I prayed five years with no apparent result. Ten years went by with no change. I continued on for fifteen years—twenty years, and still he was an unbeliever. I did not yet give him up, but prayed twenty-five years, each day mentioning his name at the throne of grace, and then came a letter saying, 'I have found the Saviour.' Then," said Mr. Müller, "I checked out this petition as answered. In this same book I have names of others that I have prayed for, five, ten, and fifteen years, and scores of names against which there is a cross, showing that the requests have been granted."

Here, then, was a man who made a business of prayer, and who kept his accounts with the Lord in a businesslike way. When he had a matter to present to God's attention, he first found a promise on which to base his appeal, always making sure if possible that it was according to God's will. Then he recorded his petition in a book, and watched and waited for the

answer. Is it any wonder that this man's faith grew rapidly, and that he became the most notable, and possibly the most successful, praying man of modern times ?

We see by this illustration why many prayers fail; they are rambling appeals, so vague and indefinite that even the petitioner can hardly remember what he prayed for when he rises from his knees. Because there is no expectation of any answer no record is made of them, and no surprise is felt if the answer does not come. And so the solemn farce goes on year after year.

It is said that in battle it takes a hundred pounds of lead to kill a man, because ninety-nine pounds and fifteen ounces of it is wasted in wild firing that aims at nothing and hits no one. On the other hand, the sharpshooter wastes no ammunition, but picks his man, and makes every bullet tell. So, if we would pray for fewer objects, more carefully selected, and then make a record of our prayers and watch for the answer, we should not waste so much breath, and we should obtain more results.

3. *By Bible-study.* Since the Word of God is the instrument by which conversion is usually effected, the personal worker must learn how to use it. The Bible is called the sword of the Spirit, but of what use is a sword to one that has not taken fencing-lessons? His opponent can disarm him in a moment, and leave him utterly defenceless. Even so many Christians that might wield the sword of the Spirit with tremendous power are almost impotent for the lack of a little special training in the use of the Bible.

On the other hand, I have known cases where young people who had only just begun the Christian life themselves, but who had been taught how to use a few verses of Scripture, would tackle people much older than themselves, and lead them to Christ. A girl of sixteen who had been converted only a week found in the inquiry-room a married couple with no one to talk to them. She approached them modestly, opened the subject of their relation to the Saviour; and, when they offered any excuse, she would answer, "Yes, it may seem so to you,

but God says so and so," and then she would read the passage. Before long all three of them were on their knees in prayer.

A friend of mine was giving studies on personal work in a New England town. A woman present, whose husband was a sceptic, committed to memory two verses that seemed especially appropriate to her husband's case. At the supper-table that night he began as usual some attack on the Bible. When he had finished, she quietly quoted the two verses that she had learned.

"Where did you get that?" he inquired fiercely.

"In the Bible."

"Do you mean to say that those words are in the Bible?"

"I do."

"Show them to me."

She brought her Bible and pointed out the passage. When he had read it, he laid down the book, and said, "Wife, I am wrong, and there is only one thing for me to do, and that is to confess my sin to God and plead for mercy"; and,

pushing his chair from the table, he added, "And I might as well do it now as ever"; and together they knelt in prayer for the first time in their lives. All that the wife had done was to quote a passage of Scripture; but it was a passage that fitted the case, and hence the result.

A man might own a whole drug-store; but, if he did not know where to find the drugs, or their various medicinal properties, he would be of little use to the sick. Even so a Christian may have a Bible that contains remedies for every conceivable spiritual condition; but, if he does not know where to find them, or how to use them, he will have little success as a soul-winner. The training-class shows how to diagnose a case, what remedies to use, and where to find them.

I know of a training-class out of which three young men started for the ministry, two young women went into mission work, and one offered herself for the foreign field. Out of another class of sixteen members, two became ministers, twelve went to the foreign field, one is a trained nurse, and one is the religious reporter on a daily paper. Another class of twenty members

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sent nearly all of the number into some form of Christian work. The fact is that, when people know how to do Christian work well, they love to do it. Why not have a training-class in your church? These are stirring times, and God needs every available worker. Will you be one, and will you advocate a training-class in your community until you get it?

Questions

Why is a godly life essential to success in personal work ?

What can one do who has made a bad record ?

What Bible characters who had made a bad record became successful workers ?

Is prayer more important than work ?

If there are fifteen hundred million people on the earth, how many can you help each day by prayer ?

How many by your example ?

By personal work ?

How long should one pray for an unsaved person ?

Is it right to stop praying for one whom the Holy Spirit has laid on your heart ?

Which is better, to pray much and work little, or to pray little and work a great deal ?

Why do so many prayers fail of an answer ?

How does a knowledge of the Bible help the personal worker ?

CHAPTER III

HOW TO OPEN RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION

OPEN it just as you would any other conversation. Decide what you wish to say, and then say it. Say it in the same tone in which you would speak of anything else. It is a great mistake to suppose that one must lower his voice, and look solemn, the moment he introduces the subject of religion. The gospel is good news. If you do not think so, the less you say about it the better ; but, if it is really good news to you, then speak of it in the same joyful, hearty way in which you would bring any other glad tidings.

The president of one of our largest theological seminaries was led to Christ in this way. During his college course, as he came out of recitation one day, a classmate gave him a slap on the back, and said, "Say, Gus, I wish you were a Christian." Gus made no reply, and the matter was dropped ; but years afterward he told his

friend that it was that remark which led him to accept Christ as his Saviour. The hearty and natural way in which his companion spoke made him feel that he was missing something that he could not afford to lose.

Christian conversation seems to be almost a lost art in some quarters. How seldom does one hear the subject broached in public places like a drawing-room or at a dinner-party even when all the people present are professing Christians! Riding in the cars with a stranger one day, I opened the subject of religion. After a while he admitted that he was a member of a church.

"If that is the case," I said, "why didn't you talk to me like a Christian, and not compel me to work so long to find out your position?"

"People don't do that down our way," said he. "If I should speak to a man who came into my store on the subject of religion, what do you suppose he would think of me?"

"He would probably think you were a Christian," I replied.

"Well, no one talks about religion down our way, not even the ministers. We never hear

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from them on the subject except from the pulpit."

That Christians do not talk more about the things of the Kingdom is a constant surprise to the unsaved, and often an occasion of doubt. Said a sceptical lady to a friend of mine: "I will tell you why I am a doubter. I was in a sewing-society last week. Forty ladies were present, and every one a church-member except myself. I was there three hours. We talked of everything down to crazy patchwork, but not a word about Jesus. I cannot believe that they see in Jesus Christ any such beauty or power as you speak of. I am convinced that there is a great deal of sham in the profession of Christian people."

On the other hand, how refreshing it is to meet those who are evidently in the condition of Peter and John, who said, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." A gentleman driving along overtook a stranger, and invited him to ride. As he approached the man, he said to himself: "I wonder what the man is thinking about, and what subject of con-

versation he will introduce. Surely it will be one of three things—the weather, the crops, or the election.” It was none of these. His first words after the usual salutations were, “How’s religion down in your country?” The question startled the man a little by its directness; but it showed where the other’s heart was, and led to a long and profitable conversation on heavenly things.

How much might be accomplished by each of us if our hearts were warm and glowing with love to Christ and our minds on the alert to improve every opportunity that God sets before us!

That it requires tact and skill to carry on religious conversation successfully, no one can deny, but is it not worth while to study the art until we become proficient in it? If we follow Paul’s advice to the Colossians, we shall always have something to say. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.” If we begin each day with David’s prayer, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength

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and my redeemer," we shall keep in touch with God. And if we watch for souls as those that must give an account, we shall have opportunities enough, so that in a short time we shall find Christian conversation a real pleasure to ourselves and a blessing to others.

I. *Study the art of diverting conversation to spiritual topics.* Go through the Gospel of John, and study carefully the Saviour's methods of approaching men. Indeed, the Gospel of John might well be called the personal worker's Gospel, so full is it of incidents that illustrate this important subject.

Take the case of the Samaritan woman. Jesus asked her for a drink of water. As He drank it, you can imagine Him saying, "This is very good water, but any one who drinks it will soon thirst again; whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life."

"What is that?" asked the woman.

"A water such that if you once drink it you never thirst again."

"Sir, give me this water that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw."

By this clever device He excites her curiosity, simply to attract attention to Himself. At another time He is the bread of life, the vine, the door, the Good Shepherd; but, whatever the subject of conversation, He always leaves His hearers face to face with the Son of God and His supreme claim upon them.

"But I am not the Saviour," you reply.

Very true; but, if you are a Christian, the Saviour dwells in you, and He has said, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist."

I know a lady to whom an agent was trying to sell an article for taking out stains. He was rubbing away, and meanwhile eloquently describing the merits of his goods. Soon the lady said, "I know something that will take out stains, too."

"What is that?" asked the man eagerly, not knowing but that some other dirt-killer had canvassed the town ahead of him.

"The blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanseth

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us from all sin. Do you know anything about that, my friend?"

Do you suppose that man would show his goods again for six months without thinking of that other something that could take stains out of a sinful heart? I doubt whether he would forget that lesson to his dying day.

A friend of mine at the Northfield Conference was asked by an expressman to direct him to a certain man's tent.

"I am very sorry," he replied, "that I cannot tell you where to find him; but, if you had asked me the way to heaven, I could have told you. Do you know the way to heaven?"

"No," said the man; "I cannot say that I do."

"Well, it is just this way," said my friend; and he went on to explain it.

The result was that the man was led to Christ right then and there. Surely that was an easy way to open religious conversation. Any one could do that. You could do it.

Do not suppose that this was the first time he had ever used this little device. On the contrary, he was always using it. It had become the

habit of his life to study the most effective ways of turning conversation. If a stranger asked him the time of day, he would be likely to answer : " It is a quarter past ten, just the time of day for a man to be saved if he isn't saved already. How is it with you, my friend? Are you a Christian? "

Of course such a question might seem a little abrupt, and it certainly would be unexpected. But, all the same, it is pointed and pertinent, and it calls for a definite answer. And, whatever the result might be, the interview would not soon be forgotten.

A Salvation Army girl was selling *The War-Cry* in a saloon, when a man said to her, " You don't believe in the Bible, do you? "

" I do," said the girl, " or I wouldn't be in this place, I can assure you."

" You don't mean to say that you believe that story about the whale swallowing Jonah? "

" Certainly I do; God says so, and I believe it."

" Pshaw! " said the man, " nobody believes that story nowadays."

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"Well," said the girl, "when I get to heaven, I will go to Jonah and ask him if he had a real experience in a real whale."

"But you won't find Jonah in heaven; he isn't there."

"Then suppose you ask him," said the girl quietly, assuming that, if Jonah was not in heaven, he might be in the other place.

"That girl was bright," you say. Very true, but who gave her that wit and wisdom? The Holy Spirit, and He will give you all the wit and wisdom you need for the work to which He has called you. "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you" (1 John 2:27). If Christians would only believe what God says, they would have more confidence to engage in personal work.

2. *Choose an opportune time and place.* It is not well to stop one who is running for a train to inquire about his soul, neither is it the highest wisdom to give a hungry man a tract. Far better give him a cup of coffee, and make it so hot that he cannot drink it. Then, while he is

sipping the coffee, you can perhaps say something to warm his heart.

It is a good plan to lay people under some slight obligation. If your neighbor in the car has no paper, buy one, and after glancing at it pass it to him, saying, "Would you like to see the morning paper?" After he has read it the most natural thing is to open conversation about the news of the day, and from this you can pass to more important topics.

Remember that persons are often more ready to talk about religion with strangers than with those whom they know. Remember that the Holy Spirit is all the while convicting people of sin, the providence of God is continually softening hearts and preparing the way for some one to drop in the good seed of the gospel. Remember also that thousands of persons have never once in all their lives had the way of salvation made plain to them, and then in a firm but loving way been urged to settle the question, and settle it now.

3. *Watch for souls as those that must give account.* When an insurance agent is intro-

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duced to a man, his first thought is, "How old is that man, and how much life insurance does he carry?" and he isn't long in finding out, either.

A friend of mine was accosted by the words, "Shine your shoes, boss?"

Looking at his feet he said, "Well, I guess I do need a shine, but I didn't know it; how did you know that my shoes needed a shine?"

"That's my business, boss; when a man comes into this hotel, I don't look to see what kind of a hat he wears, I don't look at his face, I just looks at his feet; that's my business, you see."

So should it be our business, when we meet a man, to think of his soul and the possible ways of helping him.

Do not always walk home from church the same way and with the same person. Join some one who is not a Christian, and, as you walk along, express your views about the sermon, and see what impression it has made upon him. That is what sermons are for, in part, to give people something to talk about, and arguments to use in leading people to decision.

4. *Obey every prompting of the Holy Spirit.*

It required some grace for Philip to leave a great revival at Samaria and journey down the desert road to Gaza on an unknown errand. If he had been like some Christians, he would have argued with the Lord about the matter until he had missed his opportunity; but, as it was, "he arose and went," without one word of remonstrance. He arrived at the crossroads just in time to intercept the treasurer of the great Ethiopian empire, and he had the joy of leading him to Christ. Had he arrived five minutes later, his journey would have been in vain.

One of the secrets of success in Christian work is to obey the Spirit promptly. Dr. A. C. Dixon was hurrying to church one night when he saw three young men talking by the wayside. Just as he passed he felt led to speak to them. He went back, and asked whether they were Christians. Two of them replied in the affirmative. He then invited them to church.

The one that was not a Christian said, "We haven't time to go, as we are cramming for examinations."

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Dr. Dixon simply replied, "Are you ready for the great examination, my friend?" and passed on.

That night the young man that said he had not time came to the service and accepted Christ, and is now a preacher of the gospel.

The writer was walking down the street one day when he met a friend, who said to him, "Howard, don't you expect to become a Christian some time?"

"Why, yes, I presume so. I suppose every one expects to become a Christian some time."

"Don't you think it would be a wise thing if you were to accept Christ as your Saviour now?"

"Probably. If it is a good thing to do at all, I suppose the sooner it is done, the better."

"Well, Howard, will you accept Christ now?"

I hesitated a moment, and then answered, "Yes"; and that is the way I was led to Christ.

A college classmate of mine was converted in the following manner. He was in the high school. One day his teacher walked down the aisle with her hands behind her. As she passed

his desk, she dropped a note on it in such a way that no one else would notice it. He opened it and read, "Dear Charles, as you are especially good in mathematics, I wish to propose the following question : ' What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? ' " The tactful way of approach and the pertinence of the question led to his immediate conversion, and also to the conversion of his seat-mate, who peeped over his shoulder and read the note. Any teacher could use that method.

Two boys sat in a bedroom trading stamps. One said to the other, " Jim, do you love Jesus ? "

" What is that you said, John ? "

" I asked if you loved Jesus. "

" Well, no, I cannot say that I do. "

" Well, Jim, I'm not much of a Christian myself ; but I really wish you would give your heart to Jesus. Suppose we kneel down, and I will ask Him to help you. Shall we ? "

" No, John, you needn't ask Him. I'll ask Him myself. "

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And that was the way Jim became a Christian. That was twenty-five years ago. To-day Jim is a printer in an Eastern city, doing faithful work for the Master. John is the pastor of one of the strongest churches in Chicago, and not a Christmas has passed for a quarter of a century without his receiving from Jim some grateful remembrance of that eventful conversation.

Questions

Why do Christians so seldom speak of their Lord?

How does their silence in this respect affect those that are not Christians?

Do unsaved people as a rule welcome religious conversation?

How would you open conversation with a stranger?

Give illustrations of the way in which conversation may be diverted to spiritual topics.

How can one prepare the way?

How shall we know what to say?

Who will help us in talking for the Master?

Give illustrations of an inopportune time for religious work.

How can we know when God wishes us to speak to another?

How would you meet a rebuff?

Whose word shall not return to Him void?

Is there any room for failure with such a promise?

CHAPTER IV

HOW TO USE THE BIBLE

I. THE UNCONCERNED

THERE can be no repentance until one realizes that he is a sinner, and something of the nature and consequences of sin. It is useless to argue. The only effective way is to show the person from the Bible what he is in God's sight. If he says, "I am not very bad," answer: "It may be that you are not very bad in your own estimation or in the opinion of others, but let us see what God says about you. His word is the only true standard."

Open your Bible, and ask him to read aloud Rom. 3: 10, "There is none righteous, no, not one." After he has read it ask him a few questions.

"Whose words are those that you have read?"

"God's words."

"Does He know the real condition of a man's heart?"

" Yes."

" Does He know a man's heart better than the man himself ? "

" Probably."

" Who does He say is righteous ? "

" He says that there is none righteous."

" What, not one ? "

" No, not one."

" Are you an exception to this rule ? "

" I suppose not."

" Then you admit that you are not really righteous ? "

" I suppose I must."

Ask him to read Rom. 3 : 23. Then say to him, " Who does God say have sinned ? "

" All have sinned."

" Are you an exception ? "

" No."

" Then you admit that you have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ? "

By this time the man is becoming uneasy. He is beginning to realize that, whatever he may be in his own estimation, in God's sight he is a sinner. You have withdrawn his attention from

the inconsistent church-members with whom he has formerly compared himself, and you have fixed his mind upon the great God to whom he must give an account, and by whose holy law he must be judged.

Another good verse to use with this class is Isa. 53: 6. After the man has read it ask him :

“ Who does God say has gone astray ? ”

“ All of us.”

“ Does that include you ? ”

“ I suppose it does.”

“ What does He say we have done ? ”

“ We have turned every one to his own way.”

“ Then, according to God’s word, having one’s own way is sin ? ”

“ So it seems.”

It is well to emphasize this point strongly, for to the average person the word “ sin ” means some form of vice or crime. According to this verse, however, the real essence of sin consists in having one’s own way instead of walking in God’s way. It may not be an immoral way, or a dishonest way, or an untruthful way ; but it is

his way and not God's way, in which he ought to walk.

Returning to the verse, you can ask, "What do you say of a sheep that has gone astray?"

"It is lost."

"Then, if you have had your own way through life instead of doing God's will, you too are lost, are you not?"

"So it appears."

"Admitting, then, that you are a lost sinner, what does God say that He has done with your sins?"

"'And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.'"

"Then your sins have made it necessary for Jesus to die on the cross?"

"Yes."

"When Jesus took your place on the cross and died for your sins, you refused to acknowledge Him as your Saviour, did you not?"

"Yes."

"And you have never once thanked Him for what He has done for you, have you?"

"No."

"And yet you say you are not very bad. If this is not bad, will you tell me what is? There is only one thing worse, and that is to continue rejecting such a Saviour."

Show him also the consequences of sin (Rom. 6: 23), and ask him whether he is willing to take the wages that are due him, or to assume the responsibility of "treading under foot the Son of God" by rejecting His offer of mercy (Heb. 10: 28, 29).

II. THOSE THAT WISH TO BE SAVED

This is the easiest class of all to deal with, but one needs to be as thorough with this class as with any other. Make sure that they understand what sin is, and their own guilt in the sight of God. Otherwise, salvation means but little to them, and their gratitude to Christ will be correspondingly small.

1. *Show the inquirer that he is a sinner.* For this purpose use Isa. 53: 6, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

From this it appears that having one's own way and refusing to walk in God's way is sin. It may not be vice or crime; but it is sin, for it is disobedience to God. Furthermore, it is a sin to which we must all plead guilty. We have had our own way a hundred times when we knew it was wrong; but we wanted it, and we had it, and now we must take the consequences.

The immediate consequences are a sense of guilt from which we cannot escape, and a consciousness of alienation from God, which is full of painful forebodings. Unless a reconciliation is brought about the breach between God and the sinner must inevitably grow wider, and finally end in eternal separation. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18: 4). "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25: 46).

2. *Show the provision that God has made for sin.* Continue to use Isa. 53: 6, "And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." By this we understand that God in His great mercy has laid upon His Son Jesus the punishment that belongs to us. He is the "Lamb of

God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1: 29), who "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3: 18), "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (1 Pet. 2: 24). This crucified and risen Jesus is the one whom God has made our sin-bearer, and the moment we accept Him as such our sins rest no longer upon us, but upon Him.

3. *Show the inquirer how to make Jesus his Saviour.* Jesus Christ is God's gift to a lost world. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3: 16). The way to obtain a gift is to accept it. Offer the inquirer a tract, a pencil, or a piece of money, saying, "I will give you this if you will accept it." After he has received it, show him that he can accept God's unspeakable gift in the same simple way, and just as quickly. As the gift became his the moment he accepted it, so Jesus becomes his Saviour the moment he accepts Him as such, and invites Him into his heart to take possession of his life. Furthermore, the coming

of Jesus into his heart makes him a child of God. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1 : 12). It so changes his heart that he actually loves God's will better than his own. This is the miracle of the new birth, which none can understand, but which all can experience, if they will.

4. *Show the inquirer the duty of confessing Jesus Christ before the world.* Rom. 10 : 9, 10, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

5. *Show the inquirer that his salvation rests not at all upon how he feels, but upon what God says.* General George B. McClellan after his promotion wrote to his wife as follows : "My dear, I am a major-general. I do not realize it. I do not feel any different. I have not even got a uniform ; but I know it, because President Lincoln's commission lies on my table." So a child of God knows it because he has his Father's word for it (1 John 5 : 13).

6. *Give him directions for the Christian life.*

Confess Christ often (Matt. 10 : 32, 33).

Read the Bible regularly (Psa. 119 : 11).

Have a time and place for prayer (Isa. 40 : 31).

Try to win others to Christ (Jas. 5 : 20).

III. THOSE THAT HAVE DIFFICULTIES

Do not belittle the difficulty, but try to put yourself in the place of the inquirer, and look at it from his viewpoint. Do not, however, allow the difficulty to obscure his need of Christ. This is the main question, and it should always be kept at the front.

1. "*Afraid I cannot hold out.*" The remedy in this case is to take the man's attention away from himself, and fix it upon the Lord Jesus, who alone can save him. Say to him: "My dear friend, the question is not whether you can hold out, but whether or not God is able to save you. Let us see what He says about it." Opening your Bible, ask him to read aloud Heb. 7 : 25, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." After he has read it say to him: "If

God is able to save to the uttermost, there is certainly some hope for you. With an 'uttermost' salvation such as Christ offers, there are no hopeless cases, do you see?"

"Yes, it does look a little more hopeful, I must confess; but I am afraid I should fail if I started. My bump of persistence is not very prominent, and I am easily discouraged."

"That may be true, but do you know this 'uttermost' Saviour has made provision also to keep you from falling? Read what He says in Jude 24. 'Now unto him that is *able to keep you from falling*, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.'

"Isn't that splendid? 'Able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless.' 'Blameless' would mean a great deal, but without fault means much more. And that is the condition in which Christ promises that you shall be when He presents you before the Father. Now, does not your case seem hopeful, looking at it from God's standpoint?"

"Yes, I must admit that it does, but you see my case is peculiar. I had a grandfather who

was a drunkard, and I have inherited from him an appetite for liquor. Occasionally an awful craving for strong drink comes upon me with irresistible power, and down I go before it. That is the real cause of my apprehension. If it were not for that, I think I could be saved; but you see my case is peculiar."

"Yes, I see your case is peculiar, but do you know we have a peculiar Saviour? In the first place, He was acquainted with that grandfather of yours, and He knows all about that appetite. In the second place, He has made ample provision for it in the Book. Indeed, He has provided a special promise for just such cases. Read if you will 1 Cor. 10:13, 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.'

"Now let us sum it all up. Jesus says that He is able to save to the uttermost, and able to keep you from falling. But this is not all. He promises that He will present you before God so faultless and perfect that He Himself will be

proud of you. Now what will you do? Will you keep on trying to save yourself, and fail as you always have, or will you commit your soul to this 'uttermost' Saviour, who is able to save, and keep, and protect you from every foe?"

If the man is sincere in his desire to be a Christian, there is only one course, and usually he will accept it.

2. "*I have no feeling.*" Ask the inquirer what feeling he thinks is necessary in order to be saved. If he answers, "The joy that some Christians appear to have," explain to him that their joy is the result of accepting Christ, and that he cannot expect to have it until he does the same. Read Gal. 5 : 22 to him, and show him that the fruit of the Spirit is not possible until one has received the Holy Spirit. If he complains that he has no sorrow for sin, show him from Isa. 55 : 7 that what God requires is that he *forsake* sin, and ask him whether he is willing to do that.

3. "*Too great a sinner.*" Have the inquirer read 1 Tim. 1 : 15, and show him that, if Christ

saved the chief of sinners, He can save him also. Luke 19:10 and Isa. 1:18 are helpful verses.

IV. THOSE THAT HAVE TRIED AND FAILED

Backsliders may be divided into three classes.

I. *Those that have never been converted, but once considered themselves Christians.* The churches are full of people that at some time received a religious impulse, and who perhaps expressed their purpose to lead a Christian life, but who never really received Christ.

Such people must be shown in a kind and loving way that they have been mistaken, or they will never be willing to make another trial. It is well to point out some of the evidences of the new birth, and let them see that they have never experienced it.

Rom. 8:1 shows that the Christian is delivered from the guilt of sin. Ask them whether they have ever been wholly free from a sense of guilt, and for what reason. I John 3:14 proves that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. I John 3:21, 22 shows that an obedient Christian will have answers to

prayer. 1 John 4:13 ensures the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Test a person with such passages, and he will soon recognize his true position.

2. *The second class consists of those that have drifted away from God by disobedience, and are not anxious to return.* They are like the prodigal before his money was spent. They are living a worldly life, and as long as health and prosperity continue they get along fairly well without God, though they have many rebukes of conscience and frequent longings for the good old days of fellowship with God.

With such people Jer. 2:5 is a good verse. Ask them what fault they could find with God that they have wandered from Him. Jer. 2:13 is also good. Ask them whether it is not true that their present life is evil and bitter as compared with the fellowship and joy that God provides for those who obey Him.

3. *Backsliders that are tired of sin, and are anxious to return to God.* They are like the prodigal after his money is spent and after months of hunger and loneliness in the far

country. For such Hos. 14:1, 4 is a good passage. "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him."

The most effective passage, however, is Luke 15:11-24. This not only pictures the wretched condition of the backslider, but it shows the steps by which he must return and the royal reception that awaits him. No one needs pity more than the backslider. He is despised by the world, he is a reproach to the church, he is alienated from God, and he condemns himself.

V. THOSE THAT THINK THEY HAVE COMMITTED THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

Show from Mark 3: 29, 30 that the sin for which there is no forgiveness is that of attributing to the devil the work done by the Holy Spirit. Then ask them whether they have ever been guilty of this sin.

If they quote Heb. 6: 4-6, explain to them that this passage refers to a class of people that

were in danger of rejecting Christ wholly and going back to the forms of Judaism, and the writer is showing that, if they throw away Christ, there is no other hope for them. The difficulty is not on God's side at all, but on theirs.

Having explained these two passages, ask the inquirer to read John 6 : 37, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," and keep pressing him with the question, "Are you willing to come? Never mind how you feel, or what you think, are you willing to come?"

Questions

Why are some people so unconcerned about their spiritual condition?

How can we determine whether it is real or apparent?

Does conscience ever die?

What Scripture would you use with this class?

Show how you would apply the Scripture.

What is sin?

What provision has God made for sin?

If God has laid on His Son the iniquities of us all, why are so many still under condemnation?

How can a sinner make Jesus his Saviour?

Why is it necessary to confess Christ before the world?

When a person is forgiven, where does the transaction take place?

What is the witness of the Spirit?

How can one make a success of the Christian life?

How would you deal with the man that is afraid he cannot hold out?

How would you deal with one that "has no feeling"?

What is the remedy for " a great sinner " ?

Name three classes of backsliders.

How would you deal with each class ?

How would you deal with those that think they
have committed the unpardonable sin ?

CHAPTER V

HOW TO USE THE BIBLE (*Continued*)

I. THOSE THAT OFFER EXCUSES

1. "*Not now.*" As usual, let us consider first the cause and then the cure. Perhaps there is some habit that must be abandoned, or some companion that must be dropped, or some unpleasant duty that must be done. It may be only the natural inertia of the soul, which shrinks from grappling with a subject so serious ; but more likely there is some secret sin, which the man is unwilling to abandon. The real cause is, that the man is not willing to surrender his will to God. He wants his own way, and he flatters himself that he will yield to God by and by ; but he is not willing to do it now.

Whatever the cause, the cure is always the same—God's word. Ask the man by whom he expects to be saved if he is ever saved. He will answer, "God alone can save me." Emphasize

that thought by having him read aloud John 6 : 44, "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him." Call his attention to

God's Command

Acts 17 : 30, God "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." After he has read the verse ask him whether God has a right to make such a command. Ask him whether he, who is dependent on God for salvation, has the audacity to refuse to obey this plain command. Show him the consequences of such a refusal (Prov. 1 : 24-28).

God's Time

2 Cor. 6 : 2, "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Show him that there must be some moment of definite surrender to God, and that no lapse of time will make that surrender any easier. Indeed, it will grow harder as the years pass by; and, if he puts it off, the chances are that he will never do it.

The Uncertainty of Life

Prov. 27 : 1, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Show him that in putting off repentance he is reckoning upon the continuance of life, which is entirely uncertain. Remember that Satan is persuading him in his subtle way to wait a little longer. The old serpent does not dare suggest that he never repent, or even that he put it off a long time ; but he cunningly says, "Not now."

Occasionally a soul may be won by taking the devil's side of the argument, and pleading his cause so boldly that the absurdity of his reasoning is apparent. A friend of mine was asked to speak to a young man with whom many had labored in vain. Meeting him alone one day, he said to him, "These people in the hotel are bothering you a good deal on the subject of religion, are they not?" The man blushed, and admitted that he had been somewhat annoyed. Then followed a conversation something like this :

"You don't need to give any thought to this

matter for a long time yet. You had better put it off for at least a couple of years, don't you think so?"

"I am not sure it would be well to put it off so long as that."

"Why not?"

"Because I might not live two years."

"That is true. Well, put it off one year. That is safe enough, is it not?"

"No, I don't suppose it is entirely safe, for I might die in one year."

Thus my friend reduced the time until he made the man admit that he was not sure of a day. Then he said, "If you are not sure of even a single day, hadn't you better give your heart to the Lord now?" And he did, right then and there.

2. "*Hypocrites in the church.*" In dealing with those that complain of the hypocrites in the church it is well to open your Bible to Matt. 7: 1, and ask them to read it. "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Also show them Rom. 14: 12, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

Ask the objector whether it ever occurred to him that he was a hypocrite himself, and, when he answers in the negative, say to him: "Well, let us see. You condemn the hypocrites because they pretend to be what they are not?"

"I do."

"But, when you claim that the reason why you are not a Christian is because of the hypocrites in the church, you are pretending what is not true. The real reason why you do not become a Christian is because you want your own way, and are not willing to obey God. And, when you say it is because of the hypocrites, you are saying what is not true, and you know it.

"Admitting that there are hypocrites in the church, what is that to you? If every man in the church was a hypocrite, would that excuse you from the duty of repentance?"

"If there was a call for volunteers to defend this country, would you stay out of the army because some bad men would probably enlist?"

"I suppose not."

"Possibly you are a Mason or an Odd Fellow. Are there any black sheep in your lodge?"

" I must confess that there are a few."

" And yet you joined the lodge, knowing this fact ; and you urge others to do the same ? "

" That is true."

" Why, then, do you offer so silly an excuse when the subject of religion arises ? If you do not wish to be a Christian, say so in a manly way, but do not try to hide yourself behind the faults of others. The only safe hiding-place for a sinner is the cross of Christ, and you will realize it some day."

Among the " Little Preachers " referred to in Chapter VI. is a capital one for the people that are always complaining about the hypocrites in the church. On the one side is the question, " Do those hypocrites hinder you ? " On the other side is the following :

" Remember—When the church goes through the pearly gates, those hypocrites will be left on the outside of the gate, on your side, unless you repent ; and you will have to spend all eternity with them. Would it not be better to repent, and live with them a few years in the church, than to spend all eternity with them elsewhere ?

You must spend some time with those hypocrites somewhere. Where shall it be?"

If one will scatter these freely, all the excuse-makers in town will close their mouths forever on the subject of hypocrites.

3. "*I have no time for religion.*" When a man offers this excuse, it means that he is not interested. He has all the time there is; and, if he considered his salvation a matter of much importance, he would take time for it. He may be so crowded with business and home cares that he cannot attend many meetings, but that need not prevent him from being a Christian.

When one offers the lack of time as an excuse for not being a Christian, it is well to show him by some simple illustration that this is not the real reason. Say to him, "If, in addition to your regular work you had an opportunity to earn ten dollars each week by one hour of extra work, would you accept the offer?"

He will doubtless answer, "I think I would."

"In other words, if you want time for something extra, you manage to find it. You see, my friend, the simple fact is that you do not feel the

need of salvation, and you are not interested in it. You are in the condition described in Eph. 4 : 18, 'Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart.' Why not face the fact, disagreeable as it may be ; and, when people ask you why you are not a Christian, give them the real reason instead of offering a false one ?"

Remind him also that religion does not consist of sermons and prayer-meetings, but in maintaining a certain attitude toward God, which attitude he can assume in a moment, and maintain in the midst of the busiest life. Repentance toward God and love to one's fellow men do not conflict with any one's duty, nor are they a waste of time. On the contrary, they save time, and sweeten toil, and enrich the whole life.

4. "*Too much to give up.*" Use Mark 8 : 36 and Ps. 84 : 11.

Show that what one gives up for Christ is nothing compared with what one gains, and that in the end it costs more not to be a Christian than it does to serve Christ.

It does cost something to be a Christian, it is true. It may cost the sacrifice of some pleasure, a few companions, some money ; but *not* to be a Christian will cost the loss of peace and joy unspeakable. The Christless soul must some day part forever from all his dear ones that have chosen Christ. It will cost him his soul. It will cost him heaven. Can he afford to pay the price? "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

5. "*Cannot give up my evil habits.*"

(a) You must, or perish (Rom. 6: 23; Gal. 6: 7, 8).

(b) You can, for God says so (Heb. 7: 25; 1 Cor. 10: 13).

II. THOSE THAT ARE TROUBLED WITH DOUBTS

It is not strange that men are doubters. Sin has so blinded our moral vision that we do not see the truth as it is, but in a distorted fashion, which makes it less attractive. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto him ; neither

can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2 : 14).

Furthermore, the truth as it is in Jesus carries with it condemnation for the sinner, and no one enjoys reproof or rebuke. As the lawyer, willing to justify himself, said, "Who is my neighbor?" so the natural heart questions the authority of the Bible, and even the existence of God, rather than confess its sin.

In dealing with doubters it is important to ascertain their real position. Some sceptics are mere triflers, who are too indolent to grapple with the truth in a resolute way, and so find it easier to doubt and drift with the current of their natural inclinations. Others use their scepticism as a cover for an ungodly life.

Remind them that to doubt the Bible does not alter the facts that it reveals, but it does subject them to the charge of making God a liar (1 John 5 : 10), and it puts them under condemnation. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world,

and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil " (John 3: 18, 19).

It is said that a vessel once sighted an enemy just at sundown, and kept up a cannonade until the darkness put a stop to it. When the sun arose the next morning, they were chagrined to find that the supposed enemy was an immense rock, which still remained intact after many hours of bombarding. So in all ages men have been demolishing the Bible as the enemy of the human race; but the old Book still stands, silent, but solid as the Rock of Ages. For trifling sceptics John 8: 21, 24 is very good as showing the consequences of unbelief, while John 5: 40 discloses the origin of their scepticism, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

There is another class of doubters, who are really desirous of knowing the truth. As some one has expressed it, "He wishes there was a God to whom he could come as a child to his father; but he does not know whether there is or not, and he wants to know. For such people there are two paths to the light, the intellectual and the moral. The first begins with the known,

and argues its way to the unknown. The creation proves a Creator. Intelligent and moral beings imply a Creator capable of producing such.

The other method starts with the distinction between right and wrong, which we all know, and which no moral man can doubt. Into this world has come Jesus of Nazareth. He meets our ideals; He commends Himself to our consciences; He commands our will. If we take His life and follow it, His teachings and obey them, we shall soon find our way into the light. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8 : 12). "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (John 7 : 17).

1. *Doubt whether the Bible is the word of God.* The most natural inquiry that arises at the outset is this: "What does the Bible say of itself?" 2 Tim. 3 : 16, 17.

Moses gives an account of his personal interview with Jehovah, and the giving of the Ten

Commandments, which he was told to announce to the people; and these same commandments are the basis of all civil law to-day.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel give in detail the story of their call to the prophetic office, and introduce their messages with such expressions as "Thus saith the Lord," or "The word of the Lord came to me, saying."

Paul describes his conversion and call to be a special minister unto the Gentiles.

Peter assures us that he was an eye-witness of Christ's majesty on the mount, while John gives abundant proof of both his ability and his authority to witness concerning Jesus Christ.

Our Saviour declares that He dwells in the bosom of the Father, and that He alone can reveal the Father to men. He tells us that, though the heavens and earth pass away, His words shall not pass away. He sets His seal upon the Old Testament (Matt. 5:18, Luke 24:27, 44) and guarantees the accuracy of the New Testament (John 14:26).

To the objection that science contradicts the statements of the Bible, and so destroys its

authority as a revelation of God's will, it may be said that Professor Dana of Yale University, and Professor Agassiz of Harvard University, the two most eminent scientists that America has produced, both testified to the day of their death that they knew of nothing in science that invalidated in the least degree the teachings of God's word.

Consider the unity of the Bible.

Here are sixty-six books written by about forty different people in three different languages, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, and extending over a period of about fifteen hundred years, and yet there is a unity of thought and purpose running through all these books that is utterly unexplainable on any other ground than that they were inspired by one Master Mind.

Notice the fulfilment of prophecy.

Isaiah, seven hundred years before Christ was born, affirms that He will be born of a virgin (Isa. 7 : 14). Micah declares that His birth-place will be Bethlehem (Mic. 5 : 2) ; Jeremiah, that He will come from the family of David ; Isaiah says that His name shall be called

“Wonderful” ; Daniel, that His dominion shall be world-wide ; and Isaiah, that He shall be despised and rejected of men.

Many of the details of our Lord’s death and burial are described minutely, and even the words He uttered on the cross are given. (See Isa. 53 and Ps. 22:1, 8, 18.) Our Saviour Himself foretold His resurrection again and again (Matt. 12:40; 16:21; John 2:19).

Explain the Jew

The Emperor of Germany once asked his minister to give him in one word the strongest argument for the inspiration of the Bible, and the answer was, “The Jew, your majesty.”

Yes, the Jew, the puzzle of the ages, the “People of the Restless Feet.” How shall we account for their scattered condition? God gave them their land, and why are they not there? They have ability, money, and power far surpassing many nations. Why could they not hold their own? Because they are under the curse of God for rejecting His Son and their Messiah.

The Argument from Experience

The daily miracle of sinners transformed by the power of the gospel into saints is an unanswerable argument. Every evangelist or personal worker knows what it is to see gamblers, drunkards, and all sorts of sinners converted by a single passage of God's word, and proving their sincerity by years of faithful service. What is that but a miracle?

2. *Doubt of the divinity of Christ.* Call attention to the following facts, and ask the doubter to read carefully and without prejudice the passages of Scripture.

(a) Prophecies relating to Christ which were uttered hundreds of years before He was born (Ps. 16:9-11; 22:1, 8, 18; 68:18; Isa. 7:14; 9:1-6; 40:9-11; 53).

(b) Divine titles ascribed to Christ (Heb. 1:8). John 20:28, "Thomas answered and said unto him, my Lord and my God;" and Jesus did not rebuke him.

(c) In Heb. 1:3, 10, the creation of the world is ascribed to Christ.

(d) Scriptures that teach that Jesus Christ be worshipped as God (Heb. 1:6, John 5:23, Phil. 2:10).

(e) Jesus distinctly claims to be equal with God, and to be entitled to the same honor and adoration (John 10:30; 14:9). When the high priest asked Him on His trial whether He were the Christ, the Son of the Blessed, Jesus answered, "I am" (Mark 14:62).

(f) 1 John 2:22, 23 shows that whoever denies the divinity of Jesus is a liar.

(g) The position that many take that Jesus is simply a good man, but not divine, is untenable. Either He was what He claimed to be, or else He was the greatest impostor that the world has ever seen. That He was not an impostor is demonstrated by two things. First, His resurrection from the dead, which is the best-attested fact in history. Secondly, that He was not an impostor is shown by the influence that His life and teaching have had upon the world, transforming the lives of millions, making bad men good, and good men better, converting drunkards and murderers and libertines into saints, and

leading multitudes out of idolatry and sin into the light and liberty of the gospel.

III. THOSE THAT ENTERTAIN FALSE HOPES

1. *Hope of being saved by good works.*

(a) Show that in God's sight the man is not righteous (Rom. 3 : 10, 23).

(b) Even if he were righteous, that is not God's way of saving men (Gal. 2 : 16).

(c) The only sure hope of salvation is by faith (John 3 : 16; 1 John 5 : 4).

2. *God is too good to damn any one.*

(a) Show that the purpose of God's goodness is to lead to repentance (Rom. 2 : 4, 5).

(b) Show that God does not damn any one, but men damn themselves in spite of God's goodness (2 Pet. 3 : 9-11; John 5 : 40).

(c) Show that the sinner is condemned already (2 Pet. 2 : 4-6; John 3 : 18, 19).

3. *Hope of being saved by church-membership.* Use Matt. 7 : 21-23; John 3 : 3.

Questions

How would you deal with the excuse, "Not now"?

Why cannot one choose his own time for becoming a Christian?

How meet the "hypocrite" excuse?

What does "No time for religion" really mean?

How much does it cost to become a Christian?

How much not to be a Christian?

How would you deal with one that says he cannot give up his evil habits?

Give reasons why people doubt the supernatural.

How would you deal with triflers?

With honest doubters?

How do we know that the Bible is the word of God?

Which is the strongest proof?

Name seven lines of proof for the divinity of Christ.

How would you deal with those that hope to be saved by good works?

Those that are relying on God's goodness for salvation?

Those that hope to be saved by church-membership?

CHAPTER VI

SOUL-WINNING BY LETTERS AND LITERATURE

FEW people realize how much Christian work can be accomplished by letter-writing. In some cases a letter is better even than words, for it can be read and reread, and pondered at one's leisure. Henry Clay Trumbull says that he was led to Christ by a personal appeal from a friend in a letter. What preaching and the ordinary forms of church-work had not accomplished for him was done by a few sentences in a note. As he reflected upon this, he began to realize the importance of individual work for individuals, and all his life long he engaged in this form of effort.

A prominent business man in Worcester, Mass., went to his pastor, and said that he should like to unite with the church. When asked how long he had been a Christian, he replied that he had taken the step only a few days ago, and that

he had been led to do this at the request of a lady, who had written him on the subject. He said that sermons had not made much impression on him, but that this letter from a person that he hardly knew appealed to him so strongly that he could not resist it.

Why should not Christians aim to make their correspondence count for the Master as well as their conversation? There might be some letters in which it would not be advisable to introduce the subject of religion; but, on the other hand, if the subject were uppermost in one's mind, opportunities would frequently be found to say a word for Christ, or drop a hint, or enclose a leaflet.

I know a business man who was writing a letter one day when he saw a tract on his table. He enclosed it, and mailed the letter without much thought. Then the devil whispered to him: "You have made a fool of yourself. What do you suppose that man will think of you for putting a tract into a business letter?"

Being a Christian, he lifted his heart in prayer to God, saying, "Lord, did I make a mistake?"

Back came the answer, "What is to hinder you from putting a tract into every letter you write?"

"By the grace of God I will," he replied, and for the remainder of his life he followed this practice. He saw so much good coming from this kind of effort that finally he withdrew from business, and devoted his life to writing letters and sending out Christian literature of various kinds. Not every one can do as this man did, but all can do something if they will make the effort, and pray for tact and guidance in it.

I know a lady that, to help a drinking man, took him into her family as a boarder. Soon he committed some misdemeanor, and was sent to prison. She did not forsake him in his disgrace; but, remembering the Master's words, "I was sick and in prison, and ye visited me," she endeavored to help him by writing encouraging letters. Soon other prisoners requested that she write to them, and by degrees this work increased until finally she was writing between two and three hundred letters a year to the inmates of different prisons. I have heard her say that there are to-day eight pastors of churches who

were converted through her correspondence while they were in State prison. Murderers, infidels, and hardened men of all kinds have been led to Christ by this humble woman through her prayers and letters.

A student at the Moody Bible Institute, who works in a business office until twelve o'clock each night in order to support his family, has a class of fifteen boys in Sunday-school. He writes a letter to each boy every week, and the class is growing so fast that he is now looking for an assistant teacher.

THE USE OF LITERATURE

The indiscriminate use of tracts by those whose zeal exceeds their wisdom has led many good people to question their value. It is foolish, however, to allow our prejudice against poor tracts to blind us to the value of good ones, and good ones can be had. The choicest thoughts of the best writers can now be found in leaflet form, and many a soul has been awakened by one of these silent messengers that God has put into the hand at just the right moment.

A man stepped into a street-car in New York, and before taking his seat gave to each passenger a little card bearing the words, "Look to Jesus when tempted, when troubled, when dying." One of the passengers carefully read the card, and put it into his pocket. As he left the car, he said to the giver: "Sir, when you gave me this card I was on my way to the ferry, intending to jump from the boat and drown myself. The death of my wife and son had robbed me of all desire to live, but this card has persuaded me to begin life anew. Good day, and God bless you."

There is no such thing as chance in this world, and those that seek to be led by the Spirit often find themselves messengers of mercy to some weary soul. A lady once travelled two hundred miles to tell the writer personally how a card that he had given her had led to her conversion. It lay in her bureau drawer, bearing its silent testimony from time to time as she read it, until finally it led her to Christ.

Some ministers make constant use of leaflets in their pastoral work. They open the way for conversation, and often they are better than

words ; for a soul under conviction is sometimes disposed to quarrel, but one cannot quarrel with a tract. It never loses its temper, never answers back, and it sticks to what it has said. Besides, you can send a leaflet into many places where you cannot go yourself.

People in sorrow or sickness love to be remembered, and boys think more of a minister that occasionally gives them a bright leaflet. A man wrote to me that in a town where he had used "Why a Boy Should Be a Christian" forty-five people on their examination for church-membership testified that they attributed their conversion mainly to that leaflet.

Housekeepers can use tracts to good advantage. Lay them on the parlor table that callers may read them while waiting. Often there is time enough for one to be converted while a lady is finishing her toilet. Give them to the milkman, the grocer, the postman ; enclose them in letters, library books, and packages.

Business men have fine opportunities for this kind of work. A man once said, "I cannot speak in meeting ; but, if you will supply me with

choice reading-matter, I will pay for it and enclose it in the packages which go out of my store."

Recently a customer uttered an oath in a New York business house. The proprietor quietly handed him a "Little Preacher" card entitled, "Why Do You Swear?"

The man read it; tears came to his eyes; and he said, "I beg your pardon, sir."

"Never mind me," said the other, "but don't you think you had better ask God's pardon? It was His name that you profaned."

"I will do it, sir," said the man, and shook his hand warmly.

It is not an easy matter to rebuke a swearer, but any one can say, "Here is a leaflet that you may find helpful;" or he can mail one to every profane person whom he knows.

Teachers can make good use of leaflets. Those that cannot talk with their pupils can put into their hands the wise words of others. Old-fashioned tracts will not do for boys. They want something that sparkles with life, that rivets the attention, and that stops when it gets there.

This is a busy age, we all know. People have not time, or think that they have not, to read books on religion; but, if you put into their hands something that is attractive, interesting, and that can be read in a few minutes, it is sure of attention. I am convinced that any one can easily multiply his influence twentyfold by a wise use of printer's ink.

Never give away a tract unless you know its contents. Use all the tact you have, and pray for more.

An old man said to a train-boy, "No, I do not want your pop-corn; don't you see I haven't any teeth?"

"Buy some gum-drops, then, nice fresh gum-drops."

That boy knew how to adapt himself to his customers, and so should we. Occasionally select a good tract, and print on it the name of your church or Sunday-school, with an invitation to attend the services; then canvass the whole neighborhood, leaving a tract at every house.

A physician told me recently that three times in three different cities, and at intervals of about

a year, some one put into his pocket without his knowledge a little blue card containing the words, "Have you a home in heaven, where the angels are, and where your mother is?" etc. The first two cards set him thinking; but the third came at a time when he had just lost his mother, and it led him to Christ. No one of the three people knew that they were supplementing one another's work, and yet they were. None of the three ever knew that any good came from the card that he dropped into the stranger's pocket; but the man knew, and God knew, and that was enough. We shall never know all the good that comes from this kind of silent preaching, but we know enough to make it almost criminal for us to neglect it.

It is a great aid in opening conversation with strangers to have with you a variety of leaflets or gospel cards. You can hand one to a person, saying, "Should you like something to read?" If he does not express an opinion, you can give him another, saying, "This one is a little different," or, "Here is one that I think you will enjoy." By this means you gradually become ac-

quainted, and by and by you can give him one that presents the way of salvation plainly, and ask him whether he has accepted Christ as his Saviour.

A good series of cards for this purpose is sold by the Bible Institute Colportage Association, 826 La Salle Avenue, Chicago, Ill.¹ They are called "Little Preachers," and are all that the name implies. Even an inexperienced worker can use these effectively, for they do the talking for him. They are dainty white cards printed in different colors, containing bright and pithy questions, followed by Scripture answers. There are thirty varieties suited to all classes, and they cost one dollar a thousand, assorted.

One of the most common conditions that we find is that of profound ignorance of what the Christian life is. The writer one day gave a card to a lady that was sitting in the seat with him on the cars. She seemed interested; and so he gave her another, and another. By and by he asked whether she was a Christian. She replied that she did not know.

¹ The same firm carries a line of choice leaflets suitable for personal work, written by the author of this book.

"But you would know if you were asked whether you were American or French?"

"Certainly."

"What is your idea of the Christian life?"

"I suppose that, if I tried as hard as I could to do right, I should be a Christian."

"Is that what the Bible teaches?"

"I do not know."

"Should you like to know?"

"I certainly should."

He then gave her another "Little Preacher" entitled "Only Three Steps into the Christian Life." She was ready to take those three steps then and there, and went on her way rejoicing.

Sitting in a hotel in Denver, I was reading a newspaper. By my side sat a young man talking with two others. Soon he uttered an oath. Taking out a little card entitled "Why Do You Swear?" I laid it down on the arm of the chair between us, and went on reading. He picked it up, and read it. As soon as his companions left, he said to me: "My friend, that is the best thing on swearing I ever saw. It is an awful habit, I know, and I ought not to do it; but you see I

am a newspaper man on the Chicago *Inter-Ocean*. I am thrown in with a rough crowd, and I cannot seem to overcome the habit." He then went on to tell me about himself, and we had a long heart-to-heart talk. Remember, he began the conversation, and he did most of the talking. I simply laid down the little card, and improved the opportunity when the way opened.

On another occasion I handed a little card to a man, asking whether he would like something to read. On it he saw the word "Christian," and at once he said with a sneer, "'Christian'; yes, I have neighbors who are Christians, and I have some who are not; and the latter are more neighborly and more honorable in business every time."

"That may be," I said, "but remember that it is not their religion that makes your neighbors mean and dishonorable, but the lack of it; and it is not fair to blame Jesus Christ for what does not belong to Him." Then I added, "It may be that you do not feel the need of a Saviour now, but the time will surely come when you will feel it."

" I guess I need Him enough now. My wife died about a year ago, and since then I have lost my daughter. My home is broken up, and I haven't anything left to live for."

The man's voice trembled, and the tears began to come. I saw that I had touched a tender chord, and I said, " My friend, if there is any one on this earth that needs Jesus Christ, I think you are the man." Then I held up Christ as a comforter, and told him how willing Christ was to come into his sad heart and make it glad, and into his desolate home and make it bright with heavenly hopes. Then, taking it for granted that he did not know how to find Christ, I went on to explain the way of salvation. Then I said, " Now, my friend, with this understanding of what it is to become a Christian, are you willing to accept Christ as your Saviour right here and now, and give me your hand on it?"

" Yes, sir, I am," he replied; and he grasped my hand heartily. Then we removed our hats, and I prayed, and he prayed, after which he gave me his name and told me all about himself. This was at a county fair in the midst of noise and

confusion. Horses were racing, fakers were shouting, and the merry-go-round was in full blast. And yet in the midst of that surging crowd this man with bared head stood confessing his sins to God and inviting Jesus Christ to come into his heart.

Questions

Why is a letter often more effective than the spoken word ?

How can we make our correspondence count for the Master ?

What classes of people especially appreciate a letter of interest or sympathy ?

Suggest suitable mottoes, verses, or letter-heads that silently witness for Christ.

What advantages do tracts possess over conversation ?

What classes of people can use them to advantage ?

Give your experience in the use of leaflets.

Name some of the best tracts you know.

How are tracts useful in opening religious conversation ?

May they not be just as useful in closing it ?

How can they be used in correspondence, in visitation, in Sunday-school, at county fairs, factories, and open-air meetings ?

CHAPTER VII

HOW TO BRING TO DECISION—INSTRUCTION OF CONVERTS—IMPORTANCE OF JOINING THE CHURCH

SOME time ago one of the largest insurance companies in the world advertised for one hundred agents "who could bring men to decision." This company had thousands of cases pending where the local agent had interested a man, and almost persuaded him, but was not quite able to secure a decision. Hence the need of trained specialists, who have such skill in massing arguments and meeting objections that the ordinary man is unable to resist them. Men of signal ability in this direction are in great demand, and can practically name their own salary.

It may seem a great achievement to write an insurance policy for \$100,000, but it is a far greater achievement to lead a soul to accept Christ as his Saviour (Jas. 5 : 20). There is no Christian that may not hope to lead some souls

to Christ each year, if he will claim the promise of Him who said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

In leading one to decision it is important to separate the main question from all side issues. Let the inquirer see clearly that what you ask him to do is not to join a church, or to believe a certain creed, or even to improve his life, but to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. *This*, and *this alone*, is the question.

All efforts to divert attention to side issues should be met by saying kindly yet firmly, "Yes, that may be so, but the question which you have to decide now is simply this: Will you, or will you not accept Jesus Christ as your Saviour?"

If the person has children, he can sometimes be persuaded to accept Christ for his children's sake. A wife will often agree to decide if her husband does, and this is an additional argument to use with him. Occasionally a group of friends, if approached separately, will each promise to accept Christ in case the others do. These are not the highest motives; but they are

sometimes sufficient to secure the desired result, and are useful when other methods fail.

In talking with an unsaved person avoid all denominational differences. In fact, avoid controversy of every kind, remembering that people are not driven into the Kingdom by argument, but rather won by persuasion. It is quite possible to win the argument and lose your man. Keep constantly in the spirit of prayer. Be on the lookout for any remark that may be used as a starting-point for a heart-to-heart talk, and often you will find that this is a door of opportunity that God has opened. Do not force your views upon him; but try to draw out his views, and ascertain his real position. Frequently the mere statement of his position will reveal to him its weakness, and open the way for you to show him the better course.

When you have decided what a person's attitude toward Christ is, then you are in a position to help him, and not till then. For convenience we may divide a human being into four parts: the intellect or reasoning faculty; the heart or emotional nature; the con-

science, which is always God's ally; and the will.

As a rule three-fourths of a man's nature is on God's side already. Reason tells him that it is wise to be a Christian; conscience tells him that he ought to be one; and down deep in his heart he really wishes that he was a Christian. The only thing that hinders is his stubborn will, which does not like to give up its own way and submit to God's rule.

In such cases we can often ally reason, conscience, and the emotions against the will, just as a general who captures the enemy's outworks turns their batteries upon the main stronghold, and storms it with their own guns. As a rule the main appeal must be made to the conscience—"You ought to accept Christ, and you know you ought. You ought to do it for your own good, for the sake of your influence, for the sake of your friends who love you, but above all for the sake of Him who died for you on Calvary. With Him is life, and hope and peace; without Him, loneliness, failure, and eternal separation from God."

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Use the word of God constantly, and stick to the same verses. One or two that fit the case are better than a dozen.

1. Show him his need of salvation (Rom. 3:10, 23).

2. Show him that his only hope is in Christ and His finished work (Acts 4:12; Isa. 53:6).

3. Show him that salvation in Christ is obtained by receiving Him into the heart and confessing Him before the world (John 1:12; Rom. 10:9, 10).

4. Show him that He who is able to save is also able to keep (Isa. 41:10; Jude 24).

Never mind if one says that he does not believe the Bible. A man might question whether you held a sword in your hand because it seemed to be covered with a paper sheath, but one or two sharp thrusts would soon convince him that it was a real sword. Even so the sword of the Spirit can make a man wince with pain, and even wound him fatally, though he does not believe that it is the word of God. Remember that it is alive "and powerful, and

sharper than a two-edged sword," and few people can resist it.

Remember that the object of all your appeals is to persuade the man to surrender his will to God. If all other efforts fail, if you find that you are not making much progress, try to get the inquirer to his knees. A person can see many things on his knees that he cannot see standing. As soon as Nathanael began to talk with Jesus, the light began to come, and he exclaimed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God."

Do not, however, ask the inquirer whether you may pray with him, for he might refuse; but say to him, "Suppose we pray over the matter," and drop at once to your knees. He may hesitate, for a sinner's knees are apt to be a little rusty from disuse, but as a rule he will not stand very long while you are on your knees. Then pour out your soul to God in his behalf. Many a one will break down under these circumstances who is very stubborn on his feet. The situation is so different, and he is more likely to realize that he is dealing with God instead of man.

After you have prayed say to the inquirer,

“ Now you pray, confessing your sin, and asking God to forgive you for Jesus’ sake.” It is well to quote 1 John 1 : 9 and Rev. 3 : 20 in order to show him that God is ready to grant his requests. If he is not accustomed to praying—and many are not—ask him to follow you, repeating the words after you, sentence by sentence. In this way you make sure that he will confess his sin, and invite Christ to come into his heart and take possession of his life. If he prays alone, he is likely to tell the Lord that he is sorry he has not done better, but that he hopes to do better the next time.

When you rise from your knees, question him as to what he has done, and what Christ has done for him. If he replies that he does not know that Christ has done anything for him, ask him what He promises to do for those that confess their sins and invite Him into their heart. Do not leave him until he knows that he is saved, not because he feels happy, but because God’s word assures him that he is saved.

Make him promise to confess Christ to others ; and, if any people are present, ask him to tell

them what he has done, and thus commit him so thoroughly to the cause of Christ that it will not be easy to go back.

THE IMPORTANCE OF JOINING THE CHURCH

In every war there are some soldiers that refuse to join the army. They prefer to fight independently. They are called guerrillas. But guerrilla warfare as a rule is ineffective, demoralizing, and disreputable. It damages the very cause it tries to help.

In like manner there are some people that claim to be Christians, but refuse to join the church. Like guerrillas, they unconsciously damage the very cause they ought to help. They cannot give a single good reason for their position, but there are many reasons why every Christian should join the church.

I. *There one can render the most effective service.* The church-member is one of many, who are all working under one commander and for the same end, and collectively can accomplish what could not be done separately. If it is a good thing to have churches in a community,

then Christians should support them. If all Christians were guerrillas, Jesus Christ would not have a church on the face of the earth, or even a single acknowledged follower.

Remove the churches from a town, and property would depreciate, business would decline, and all good people would move away. Sunday would become a holiday; life and property would be unsafe; and the town would soon have so bad a reputation that no decent person would move into it. For this reason every Christian owes it to himself and his family, to society and to his God, to join and support some church.

2. *It is the only consistent position for a Christian.* In the church his influence will help and not hinder; for an outsider, who ought to be in the church, damages the cause of Christ just as much as an insider that ought to be out. A Christian that refuses to join the church practically says to the world that the commands of Jesus are not binding or important, which is not true. The Master distinctly commands His disciples, saying, "Believe and be baptized," and, "Do this in remembrance of me," referring to

the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. What right have we to disobey these commands? Furthermore He says, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you," and "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

These plain passages show that Jesus does not reckon as His friends those that disobey His commands, and does not wish to have them call Him Lord unless they do the things which He says. Besides, the world refuses to count one as a Christian unless he joins the church. In the matter of loyalty to Christ there is no neutral ground. We are either for Him or against Him. We either count or discount.

3. *A Christian that does not join the church will soon lose his joy, and perhaps his hope.* If, knowing his Master's wish, he refuses to comply with it, he cannot be a happy person. He may be a saved man, but he will lose the joy of his salvation. His words will have no weight with others, because he has not come out from the world himself. Furthermore, he is in danger of losing all interest in the matter of salvation, because the habit of disobeying those commands

that are irksome to him will soon lead him to disregard all Christ's commands, and drop back into the Christless life entirely.

4. *To be a member of Christ's church is the highest honor this world affords.* Its sacraments are the most sacred, its literature the most sublime, and its fellowship the most sweet and enduring. All lodges and other organizations are man-made affairs; but the church is a divine institution, founded by Jesus Christ, guided and guarded by the Holy Spirit, having for its mission the evangelization of the world, and for its destiny eternal fellowship with God in heaven.

5. *If it be objected that there are some hypocrites in the church,* the answer is, "Yes, it may be true; but Jesus Christ is no hypocrite, and He is the life of every church." If half the members of the church were hypocrites, we should still join the church, because it is our Master's wish and prayer. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."

6. *The Christian that refuses to join the church dishonors Jesus Christ.* He is willing

that Christ should die for him, but he is not willing to live for Christ, or even to acknowledge his relation to Him. He desires to be saved, but he is not willing to serve. He wants the benefits of Christianity without the sacrifices, whereas the sacrifices constitute nine-tenths of the benefits.

The meanness of it is well illustrated by the following story : Dr. Lorimer once asked a man why he did not join the church. The reply was that the dying thief did not join the church, and he was saved.

"Well," said the Doctor, "if you do not belong to a church, you help support missions, of course?"

"No," said the man. "The dying thief did not help missions; and he was saved, was he not?"

"Yes," said the Doctor, "I suppose he was; but you must remember that he was a dying thief, whereas you are a living one."

Do not deprive your Saviour of the honor that belongs to Him.

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Cor. 6 : 17).

“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10: 32, 33).

Questions

In leading a soul to decision what is the main question ?

How can one separate it from side issues ?

Which is the wiser course, to crowd our views upon another, or to draw out his views, and suggest possible improvements ?

What should be avoided ?

Into what four parts may man be divided ?

Which of these are usually on God's side ?

Which needs to be persuaded ?

To which must the main appeal be made ?

What reasons can you give why a person should be a Christian ?

Which is the strongest of all ?

Is it wise to use many or few verses of Scripture ?

What advantage is gained by a constant repetition of the same verse ?

Describe briefly on paper how you would lead a soul to decision.

Would you use the Bible with one that does not believe in it ?

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If all appeals fail, what other resource is left?

What is the advantage of having the inquirer follow you in prayer, sentence by sentence?

What reasons can you give why a Christian should join the church?



Prayer for the Quiet Hour

BY

REV. FLOYD W. TOMKINS, S.T.D., LL.D.

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